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Report for

Land at Pine Hollow Barn, Stoke Lane, Higham on the Hill, Leicestershire Protected Species Survey

Date of Report – 6th December 2011

Proprietors
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Protected Species Survey at Land at Pine Hollow Barn, Higham on the Hill

Name of Client: Mr J. Price

Address of Client: Pine Hollow Barn, Stoke Lane, Higham on the Hill, nr Nuneaton, Warwickshire, CV13 6BS

Date of Survey: 6th December 2011

Weather Conditions: 30% cloud, dry, windy. Temperature 5^0C.

Address of survey site: Land at Pine Hollow Barn, Stoke Lane, Higham on the Hill, nr Nuneaton, Warwickshire, CV13 6BS

Planning Application Number: 11/00815/FUL

Grid Reference of survey site: SP 384 957

Name of Surveyor: A.B.Gibney BSc (Hons), MIEEM

Licence Numbers: Great Crested Newt 20113998, Bat 20114275 & Barn Owl 20114276 issued by Natural England

Reason for survey

It is proposed that hardstanding areas be created to provide sites for mobile homes on the site. A protected species survey (particularly for Great Crested Newts) was requested as part of the Planning Permission conditions to carry on the development

Site Description:

The site is in a village setting on the outskirts of Higham on the Hill. It is an area of compacted gravel, surrounded by wooden panel fencing. There is an existing mobile home on the site and a brick outbuilding, which are unaffected by these proposals. There was a length of species poor defunct hawthorn *Cretaegus monogyna* hedge, plus a deciduous tree, which are also unaffected by the proposals. There were a fruit tree on site, an apple *Malus* sp., which is also unaffected by the proposals.
There were no ponds on site; however there was a pond about 50m away from the development to the south of the site. A 'Habitat Suitability Index' value survey was undertaken at this visit. The HSI value was calculated at 0.34, which means it would have a poor suitability as a breeding pond for great crested newts.

Survey Method:

1. The site was systematically searched for Great Crested Newts (*Triturus cristatus*) or for any suitable habitat for them to live or breed in.

2. The pond, which was about 50m from the development site, was surveyed to calculate its habitat suitability index value.

3. A note was also made of any evidence of other protected species, particularly nesting birds and badgers (*Meles meles*).

Results:

1. There was no suitable Great Crested Newt terrestrial habitat within the proposed site, and there were no refugia sites found on the site. Nearby refugia sites, when checked did not reveal any amphibians.

2. The nearest pond to the site was an unsuitable great crested newt breeding site, with a HSI value of 0.34.

3. There were no cavities or other features found in any of the trees, although none will be affected by the proposals.

4. There was no evidence of any other protected species.

Conclusion:

- The site of the planning application is not particularly good amphibian terrestrial habitat and no Great Crested Newts were found.

- The pond was calculated to have a poor suitability for great crested newts.

- There was no evidence of any other protected species (particularly Badgers and nesting birds), and there was no suitable habitat within the site to be developed, although the nearby hedge would provide suitable nest sites for some bird species.

Legislation:

Nesting Birds: Nesting Birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy its nest whilst in use or being built, or take or destroy its eggs. In addition to this, for some rarer species (listed on Schedule 1 of the Act), it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb them while they are nest building or, at or near a nest with eggs or young, or to disturb the dependent young of such a bird.

Mitigation/Recommendations:

1) Birds – It is recommended that removal of any vegetation (if any is to be removed) be scheduled outside the bird nesting season (normally considered to be March-August, although this can be extended with certain species and due to climate change factors). If there is any doubt as to whether birds are nesting or the work is to be carried out within this bird nesting season, it is advised to get the area checked by a suitably qualified ecologist. Should an active nest be found, the nest must remain undisturbed until the young birds have fledged, which may cause a delay in the proposed works.

2) No further surveys are required, plus there are no other recommendations or mitigation required.

References

Gent,T. & Gibson,S. [Eds] (2003) *Herpetofauna's Workers' Manual* JNCC

Oldman, R.S., Keeble, J., Swan, M.J.S., & Jeffcote, M. (2000) *Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the great crested newt* (*Triturus cristatus*) Herpetological Journal Vol 10, No. 4 pg. 143-157

Betts, C.J. (2007) *Checklist of Protected British Species* Christopher Betts Environmental Biology

Report Produced by A.B.Gibney BSc (Hons), MIEEM
Curious Ecologists Ecological Consultancy

Appendix 1

Photographs of Site



Photo 1: Proposed site of hardstanding



Photo 2: Nearby pond

Table 1. Habitat evaluation of waterbodies for great crested newt (Oldman *et al* 2000)

Survey Criteria	Optimal characteristics	Suitabilty Index (SI) of ponds. From tables etc in Herp. Journal				
		Pond at 50m north of site				
Location	(from map in Herp. Journal)	1				
Pond Area	Measured in m^2	1				
Pond Drying	Years out of ten that pond dries	0.9				
Water quality	Ranges from good, clear (SI value 1) to bad, turbid (SI value 0.01)	0.33				
Shade	Estimate of % of perimeter of pond shaded	0.4				
Fowl	Number of waterfowl per pond per $1000m^2$	0.01				
Fish	Fish may predate and consume eggs and larvae. Estimate	0.67				
Number of ponds	Within 1km of target site	0.1				
Terrestrial	From maps	0.67				
Macrophyte %	Estimate of pond vegetation	0.4				
Habitat Suitability Index per pond		**0.34**				

S.I.		Pond suitability
<0.5	=	poor
0.5 – 0.59	=	below average
0.6 – 0.69	=	average
0.7 - 0.79	=	good
>0.8	=	excellent